

I ASKED MY MACHO SALES MANAGER PALS "WHAT'S
A HAT TRICK?"

Which of course was
the wrong thing to ask because they're all
serious sports junkies,
some of them even watch golf
on TV, but anyway
I asked them and they made faces
and held their bellies
and groaned about how they can't
believe I know even less about ice hockey
than about the other great sacred
American pastimes,
like football and baseball, basketball
and fishing, and how
could I even call myself an
American if I don't know what a damn
hat trick is, and I say,
"Yeah, yeah, okay, hey look I tried
once after the US Ice Hockey
Team beat the Soviets in the '80 Olympics
to get into it but Christ
it is just the most violent thing I've
ever seen, players getting
their heads smashed in
with sticks and pucks, getting slammed
unconscious up against rink walls,
and whereas I can appreciate
the social value of sports violence,
it being a controlled outlet
for man's natural agressions, well it's
simply too violent for me."
And they made more faces
of disgust and grabbed at their
bellies and groaned
about me being just the most simpering
little pussy on the planet. But at least
I finally found out that
a hat trick is three goals scored by
a single player in one game,
because in the old days after the third
goal the fans threw their hats
in the rink.

DAD THANKS FOR THE
ADVICE BUT I SHOULD'VE
DONE IT YOUR WAY

I didn't join the Navy like you did
Dad didn't ship-out during two
terrible wars didn't learn to fix

trucks and cars like you learned crawling all around on your belly in the cold grease and dirt and oil because you wouldn't have me doing any of that you always said "use your head son not your hands don't get stuck laboring your whole life long like me" so I did what you told me Dad what you wanted I went to college even took advanced degrees found myself a nice clean white-collar office job and now I'm using my head sure using my head thinking all the time about how to market this product how to sell more of that product but I must tell you how incredibly inane disgusting even this businessman's life is and how I wish I had done a stint in the Navy and learned to fix cars for a living like you did Dad just like you.

I GET THE FEELING MY
BROTHER TODD IS DRINKING
TOO MUCH

I called up my brother Todd 9 o'clock at night I'd received in the mail a certified copy of the marriage certificate of Grandmother Muriel and Grandfather Fred no one else in our family knew they were married September 23, 1922 no one even knew what year it was all a mystery in part because she was only 16 at the time but anyway the photocopied piece of paper sent to me by some bored functionary down in New York City had almost a reverential feel because Grandmother Muriel died merely 10 years later in 1932 died by putting her pretty head in an oven in her mother's oven and breathing in more gas than she should've so anyway I was so excited knowing this information that I called up Todd and he answered the phone and after I finished my impassioned soliloquy he giggled and slurred "oh gee that's nice that's really nice have you had a bottle of wine yet to celebrate?"